

September 21, 1999

TRIBUTE TO THE 1999 RETIREES
OF THE STERLING HEIGHTS
FIRE FIGHTERS UNION

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 21, 1999

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Battalion Chief Dennis Foster and Battalion Chief Dale Monnier who will be honored on their retirement from the Sterling Heights Fire Fighters Union at their Annual Dinner/Dance on September 24, 1999.

It is my privilege to recognize these two firefighters for their outstanding contributions to public service. Beginning their service in 1974, Battalion Chiefs Foster and Monnier continually sought to further their knowledge and experience in the field of public safety, always committed to providing their community with the best service.

Their participation in community events have made these gentlemen an integral part of their city, and their acts of heroism have made Sterling Heights a safer and better place to live.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me, the citizens of Sterling Heights and the Fire Department in recognizing these outstanding firefighters for the dedication and accomplishments they have provided to the people's welfare in Sterling Heights. I wish them good health and happiness in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO DR. BENJAMIN
BARNES GRAVES OF HUNTSVILLE, AL

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 21, 1999

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an intellectual treasure of my district, Dr. Benjamin Graves of Huntsville, AL. Dr. Graves has excelled in all facets of academia. As a student, he cultivated a love of learning through his time at the University of Mississippi, Harvard University, University of Chicago and Louisiana State University. His 50-year career in industry and education includes professorships at Louisiana State University, University of Virginia, University of Mississippi, Pennsylvania State University, University of Alabama at Huntsville and University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He served as president of Millsaps College from 1964-1969 and the University of Alabama at Huntsville from 1969-1978. His distinguished reputation as an academian is supported by the presentation of approximately 300 of Dr. Graves' papers to various audiences over 15 states in the course of the last 20 years.

In honor of Dr. Graves' extraordinary service to the Huntsville community, he will be awarded the 1999 James Record Humanitarian Award by the Arthritis Foundation on September 21st. The description of the award "given to a citizen devoted to promotion of human welfare as well as the advancement of

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social and cultural reform" illustrates the essence of this man.

Dr. Graves served his country in the U.S. Navy first on active duty from 1942-46 and then in the reserve from 1946-1955. On active duty during World War II, he served as a supply officer aboard three naval ships in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. I believe this CONGRESSIONAL RECORD tribute is fitting for one who has given so much for both the defense of his nation and for the betterment of countless students across the Southeast.

His love of learning is infectious. Dr. Graves carried his intimate and unparalleled knowledge of higher education to other countries when he was selected by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities to be a part of a study team to China and Taiwan. In addition to his exceptional professional contributions to our area, Dr. Graves has given of himself, establishing scholarships at both Millsaps and UAH and serving in his church, First United Methodist of Huntsville as a lecturer and administrative board member.

Throughout his life, Dr. Graves has set a great example of how one person can make a huge difference in his community. I want to congratulate him on his well-deserved honor as the 1999 James Record Humanitarian Award and I want to commend him for his tireless efforts for the students of North Alabama.

U.S. DISTRICT COURT FINDS PAT-
TERN OF RACKETEERING BY
PALESTINIANS AGAINST U.S.
FIRM IN GAZA

HON. JAMES A. TRAFICANT, JR.

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 21, 1999

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, in 1995 the United States and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Gaza-Jericho Agreement to encourage American investment in Gaza and the West Bank, as a follow-on to the Oslo Peace Accord between Israel and the PLO. Bucheit International Limited, a 90-year-old, family-owned business based in Youngstown, OH, agreed to be the model company for U.S. investment in Gaza under the Builders for Peace program.

After investing \$4.4 million in the area, however, Bucheit has experienced a myriad of problems, including: transportation and standards barriers, a mismanaged regulatory system, and unethical, if not illegal, activity, which have resulted in Bucheit's default on a \$1.1 million loan from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) loan. Furthermore, Bucheit International has experienced numerous unethical and questionable activities in its dealings with Cairo Amman Bank of Gaza. For example, Bucheit has discovered that corporate accounts were opened without proper corporate documentation; corporate checks denominated in dollars were endorsed and cashed by individuals, without first being deposited into the corporate account; canceled checks were not returned; corporate funds in excess of \$100,000 were used to guarantee an overdraft facility of a private individual, without knowledge or approval by the corpora-

tion; and a letter of guarantee was written by a bank without notifying Bucheit, in violation of Bucheit management's strict instructions. In addition, Bucheit's plant and equipment were stolen and continue to be operated illegally. Moreover, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has pocketed Bucheit's value-added-tax (VAT) reimbursement from Israel as well as kept the income tax deducted from Bucheit's payments. Without access to its funds or equipment, Bucheit is currently in default of the \$1.1 million OPIC loan.

Recently, Bucheit filed a civil RICO (Racketeering, Influence and Corrupt Organizations) complaint against the Cairo Amman Bank in Gaza for misappropriating loan proceeds advanced to Bucheit from OPIC. On August 17, 1999, U.S. District Judge Kathleen McDonald O'Malley found that the Cairo Amman Bank engaged in a pattern of racketeering activity that caused the failure of Bucheit's precast concrete plant in Gaza. Specifically, the court ruled that there existed an "enterprise" made up of the Bank, Bank employees, an influential Bank customer and other persons, and the Bank knowingly participated, directly and indirectly, in the conduct of the affairs of the "enterprise" through a pattern of wire fraud. Judge O'Malley awarded Bucheit roughly \$15 million in damages. Included in that amount is the \$1.4 million due OPIC.

I find it troubling that the House-Senate conferees on the Foreign Operations Appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 are considering the addition of \$400 million for the Palestinian Authority, while an American investor and the United States government have been blatantly ripped off. To date, the Palestinian Authority has neither authorized an official, internal investigation into the existing "enterprise," nor has it meted out proper punishment to the individuals involved.

As a result, I have requested that the House-Senate Conferees on the Foreign Operations Appropriations for FY 2000 withhold the \$15,206,403 owed Bucheit International, which includes a \$1,436,837 loan repayment for OPIC, from the \$400 million appropriation for the Palestinian Authority.

Unpunished, the guilty parties will continue with their illegal and unethical behavior to the injury of future American investors, the U.S. government and the Palestinian people. To create jobs, growth and higher income, a nation must convince its own citizens as well as foreigners that they can safely invest: fair tax laws and fair enforcement, independent courts enforcing the law consistently and upholding contract rights, strong banks that safeguard savings, and vigilance against hidden ties between government and business interests that are inappropriate.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1059,
NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION
ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

HON. JOHN M. SPRATT, JR.

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 21, 1999

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I want to elaborate on the remarks I made on September 15,

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